California State University, Long Beach

DAILY 49ER

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
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ARCHIVES

OPINION

Abort the GOP's proposed ultrasound law

ARIANA SAWYER
Opinions Editor

For doctors, the Oath is the most sacred of laws. The Hippocratic Oath states, "I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy and understanding may outweigh the surgeon's knife or the chemist's drug."

Yet a few House Republicans have sought to undermine the oath by introducing a mandatory ultrasound bill (HR 492) last Thursday that would force women to look at and listen to a detailed description of the anatomy and function of the embryo or fetus on the screen, potentially causing psychological upset.

Doctors would be required to do this or else risk losing their license and paying hefty fines.

"I'm pro-choice because it is a woman's body, so it's her choice," Isley Jordan, a 26-year-old living in New Orleans, said. "That sounds cliché, but it's true. She is the only one with the physical burden and the only one who will have to feel sick, tired, emotional, and less capable for nine months. She is the only one who will be responsible for this life."

Jordan recently got an abortion at the only available clinic in New Orleans, the Women's Health Care Center.

It is already the law in Louisiana to force women to have an ultrasound throughout which what they are viewing must be described to them, sometimes between embarrassed apologies.

All ten of the Republicans pushing to pass this bill are men, and not one of their female colleagues will support them. This is not surprising, as the bill would result in a practice that would be both completely ineffective and potentially damaging to the psychological well being of the patients (women). It is an attempt to play on the emotional

see **ABORT**, page 5

CONSTRUCTION CONGESTS CAMPUS

AMY PATTON | DAILY 49ER

On Monday, cars trying to squeeze past the construction zone in front of the nursing building clogged University Dr. on campus.

Starting Monday night, the construction will last until Tuesday afternoon. Eric Stiers, California State University, Long Beach campus inspector said the construction is intended to address a break in a central plant line fitting.

"These joints are getting old, and as they break, we've got to fix them," Stiers said.

The central plant line controls the heating and cooling of the nursing building Stiers said. He said the infrastructure runs through all the roads on CSULB campus. ▲

DIVERSIONS

Through the fired glass

CSULB art student gives unredeemable glass a new purpose in his senior show "No Redemption Value."

BY BROOKE BECHER
Diversions Editor

Light bounced around the white-walled gallery in between Fine Arts buildings 1 and 2 on Sunday evening, refracting through glass structures reminiscent of a lost, underwater crystalline cave.

This marked opening night at California State University, Long Beach for this semester's School of Art senior shows, which are weekly exhibits in the spring that typically showcase the work of students in their final year.

The translucent stalagmite-like reefs were works Maccabee Shelley, a post-baccalaureate of studio art from Humboldt State University. In this show titled "No Redemption Value," his second at CSULB, he said he emphasizes the execution rather than a message.

"This show is about exploring every little odd and end and to look under every rock," Shelley said. "I kind of like to think of a river that's flowing and divides into all tributaries … you have to walk up every single one of them to see what's up there."

With torn-up hands, he sipped from a pink cup of strong-smelling vegetable blend. Shelley was worn and tired from another long night of finalizing the gallery for which he had spent about three and a half months compromising his physical being.

"You don't know if you're going to pour your effort, time, energy, money and resources into something that's going to be a hunk of crap that will cut you if you try to pick it up and almost break your back trying to move it," Shelley said. "It can be really hard on you."

Several trips, 200 pounds of glass and a couple of trash bins later, Shelley ended his dumpster diving days and instead make up to three visits per day to the Associated Student Inc. Recycling Center in order to render materials for his work.

And that's only the beginning. Shelley recalled hurling bricks, bashing the raw materials with a metal rod or simply chucking bottles against a wall to produce glass shards that he can later manipulate under high temperatures.

He describes himself as a "very curious explorer and high-energy person." The all-engaging nature of ceramics complements Shelley's high-strung personality, which allows him certain omniscience when it comes to articulating the cause and effects before and after the kiln.

"[Ceramic art is] just a rabbit hole and you can keep going deeper but you'll never find the end of it," Shelley said. "It just goes and goes and goes … there's so many things you can explore formality, color, shape value, light and shadow."

> **"[Ceramic art is] just a rabbit hole and you can keep going deeper but you'll never find the end of it..."**
>
> *-Maccabee Shelly, Post-baccalaureate of studio art*

It doesn't hurt that Shelley comes from a background in science and his resume has racked up a few technician jobs including his time working at his community college, the City College of San Francisco.

"I'm very drawn to the ocean, the earth, geology ... I think it gets back to my sense of sensibilities—road cuts, the way erosion works," Shelley said. "I've learned to really listen to my sensibilities and follow them."

Andre Ajibade, a CSULB junior

see **GLASS**, page 6

Fifth floor gets techy

The fifth floor of the library is now equipped with media:scape tables that encourage group work.

BY MADISON D'ORNELLAS
Assistant News Editor

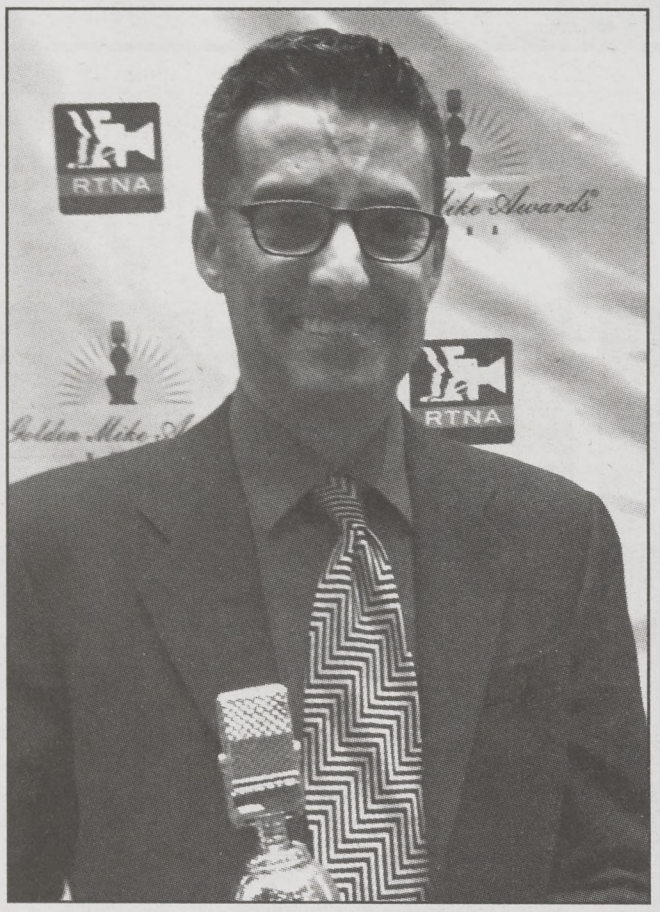
Newly implemented media:scape tables, which connect laptops to LG TV screens, can enable more collaborative learning on the fifth floor of the library.

According to Steelcase, media:scape's manufacturing company, media:scape "merges furniture and technology to help teams quickly and easily share information."

By connecting laptops to the large screens, students can optimize group work and create a more interactive space for producing power points and online projects together.

"The point wasn't meant to make the whole floor Star Wars Episode Twenty," said Tracey Mayfield, Associate Dean of the library. "[media:scape tables] are there to help facilitate the group work we know you are already doing."

see **TECH**, page 3



COURTESY OF JEFF KAURMAN
Jeff Kaufman holds the Golden Mike award for best individual writing in radio at the Golden Mike Awards on Saturday.

Staying golden

A KBeach producer won the Golden Mike for individual radio writing.

BY AMY PATTON
News Editor

KBeach, the student radio station at California State University, Long Beach, won the Golden Mike for best individual writing in radio at the 65th Annual Golden Mike Awards Ceremony on Saturday.

Jeff Kaufman, the producer and anchor for Hi-Definition at KBeach, won the award for his piece, "15 Seconds to Confusion," according to a press release from The Radio and Television News Association of Southern California.

"[Writing is] the one thing I think I'm good at," Kaufman said. "Writing leads to everything else so it really means a lot to recognized for writing."

Danny Lemos, a KBeach faculty media advisor, said the award was the station's second Golden Mike in two years.

"We are so proud to be recognized among the leading college radio news outlets in Southern California – right up there with KCSN and KCRW," Lemos said via email.

Kaufman said he thinks the award signifies that KBeach is on the right path.

"KBeach has really turned around [in the past few years," Kaufman said. "It has become an outlet for the students and the community… to learn about radio in this digital age."

Kaufman said "15 Seconds to Confusion" was inspired by NBC's news packages called "15 Seconds to Truth," a video series that aired on MSNBC and on NBC's website in spring 2014.

NBC's news packages were 15-second news stories told in completely in pictures and graphics, Kaufman said.

"After they first went online, I had a look at it and I thought this is just crazy," Kaufman said. "[So] I had a little fun with it, [making a] little fun of it and make a point at the same time that this is not the solution to the news businesses' problems, to make it even dumber and shorter."

Kaufman said he hopes his piece won because the style was breezy, informal and easy to understand, but "still had some style to it."

"Jeff Kaufman has spent over two years as a volunteer mentoring our radio journalism students and richly deserves the recognition for his own writing," Lemos said via email.

Lemos said KBeach enters several categories for the Golden Mike Awards every year. Kaufman said the Golden Mike Awards are one of the few journalism contests that do not have to give an award if judges do not think anything in the category is worthy.

According to the aforementioned press release, the Radio & Television News Association of Southern California presents annual Golden Mike Awards "for excellence in news and public affairs programming on broadcast, cable and Internet outlets in the 13 California counties south of Fresno."

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TECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In addition to the LG screens, the media:scape tables include "media wells" that carry cords to connect laptops to the TVs. Instruction booklets are currently on the four to five seat tables and directions for connecting laptops are drawn inside the media wells.

Mayfield said that the media:scape tables were put into place during winter break and are part of a bigger project looking to make the fifth floor "entirely for collaborative study."

Mayfield also said that infographs are being developed to help students learn how to use the media:scape tables.

"I think since everyone is pretty tech savvy, they could learn it pretty quickly," said senior classics major Courtney Llaban. "But I don't know if it would be necessarily used for educational purposes."

Llaban argues that the new technology will serve less for educational use and more for entertainment purposes.

"During the regular school days I'm pretty sure it's going to be for entertainment, Llaban said. "That's essentially going to be like a Netflix area, lets not kid ourselves."

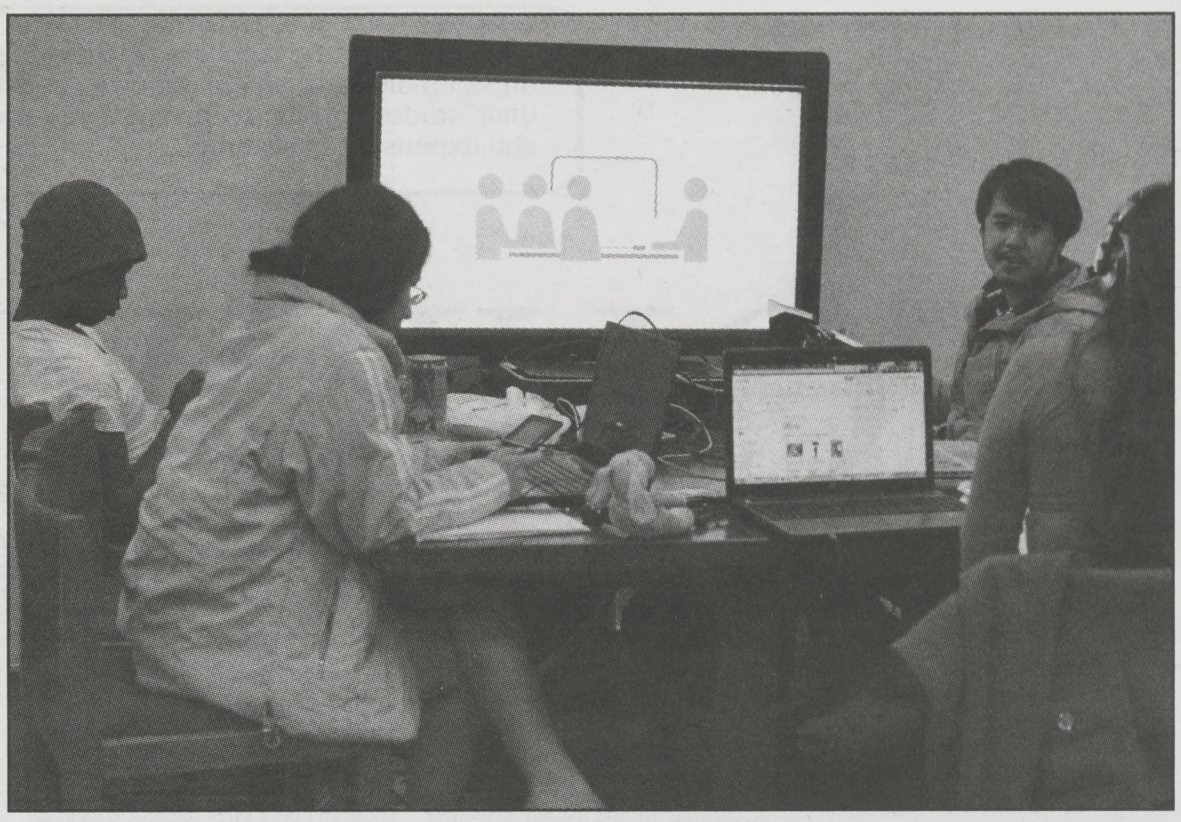
Fellow senior classics major Megan Gilbert said that group projects would lead students to the media:scape tables.

"I probably won't use them this semester because I won be on campus as much and I don't think I have any group projects that I would use that for," Gilbert said. "But I think the only time we would use it for school related [purposes] would be for a group presentation and just testing them."

Steven Bowyer, a first year geography grad student, said incoming students "[may be] a little hesitant to use them, unless they see other people using them."

"Not everyone will need the media:scape tables, and that's okay," Mayfield said. "They are only meant to be an aid to you guys and are there if you need them."

Mayfield said that more new additions to the fifth floor would include new carpet, more collaborative furniture and charging stations for cell phones and tablets.



BOBBY YAGAKE | DAILY 49ER

A group of students utilize the new media:scape tables to work on a group project on the fifth floor of the University Library.

GOT AN OPINION?

EMAIL OPEDD49ER@GMAIL.COM

UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION FEE REFERENDUM

VOTER PAMPHLET AND SAMPLE BALLOT

VOTER INFORMATION

The University Student Union Board of Trustees (USUBOT) has requested that the university's Student Fee Advisory Committee conduct a referendum to cover the cost of construction, renovation, expansion, and continual operation of the University Student Union by increasing the student body center (USU) fee. The fee referendum will be conducted as an online election on Wednesday, February 25 and Thursday, February 26, 2015.

BACKGROUND

For the past four years, the USUBOT has been researching and considering the possibility of renovating and expanding the USU. The facility was constructed in the late 1960s and opened in 1972, with an additional renovation in the mid-1990s. With the increasing age of the USU (i.e., over 40 years), the cost of major repairs has exceeded the available operating funds. Currently, the USU is faced with the possibility of having to decrease and/or eliminate certain programs and services in order to address needed facility improvements, such as plumbing, electrical, heating/air conditioning, and internet services.

The USUBOT conducted two formal assessments of CSULB students' needs and desires for the USU. The assessments, conducted in 2011 and 2014, included numerous focus groups, intercept interviews, and online surveys of the entire student body. The 2011 survey had 37% of the student body participate; the 2014 survey had 24% participate. Additionally, the assessment examined the needs for facility improvements. As a result of the data collected, the USUBOT is proposing the construction, renovation, and expansion of the USU with the following improvements and modifications:

- Renovate/replace all electrical, internet, plumbing, heating/air conditioning, and sewage systems
- Increased informal student lounge space
- More study space, including group study rooms
- Expanded food service seating
- Centralized Student Resource Centers (e.g., cultural, religious, AB 540, LGBTQIA, Women's Resource Center, etc.)
- Increased student organization office/meeting space
- Sustainability Resource Center (One-stop shop for learning about sustainability/environmental efforts and events on campus)
- Expanded student conference, ballroom, and meeting facilities
- Improved Beach Auditorium (i.e., additional seating, movie theatre quality A/V, ADA accessibility, etc.)
- Possible extended hours and 24 hour study lounge location

If approved, specific configurations and programs will be determined during the design phase of the construction project anticipated to occur in summer 2015. To minimize the impact to the campus population, every effort will be made to keep the USU services and programs available during construction which will likely last four to five years. The proposed USU fee increase will be $165 per semester ($124 per summer semester), which will not be assessed to students until the year the renovated sections of the USU open.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ARGUMENT FOR A FEE INCREASE

- The $165 fee increase will allow the USU to address the immediate need for major facility improvements such as electrical, internet, heating/air conditioning, plumbing, and drainage, while meeting current and future student demand in terms of lounge and dining seating, study space issues, resource centers and technological upgrades.
- Students will not have to pay the new fee until the year the renovated sections of the USU open in approximately four years.
- The $165 fee increase will prevent any cuts in USU programs and services and will maintain the integrity of the facility for years to come.
- Since the $165 fee increase would be a mandatory student fee, financial aid could be used to cover this fee.
- Although CSULB is one of the largest campuses in student enrollment, our student fees will still rank in the lower half of all CSU campuses.

ARGUMENT AGAINST A FEE INCREASE

- The $165 per semester fee increase is in addition to other fee increases such as the recent increase in the Associated Students fee.
- Some students may believe the current USU facility is sufficient for their use.
- The $165 per semester fee increase may impact students who do not receive financial aid or scholarships.
- Some students may not take advantage of the renovated facility and its programs and services.

This notice is issued by the Student Fee Advisory Committee.
California State University, Long Beach
November 7, 2014

SAMPLE BALLOT

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
LONG BEACH

STUDENT FEE REFERENDUM
SPRING 2015

SHOULD THE STUDENT BODY CENTER (USU) FEE BE INCREASED BY $165 PER SEMESTER ($124 IN THE SUMMER) FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, RENOVATION, AND EXPANSION OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION (USU)? THE FEE WOULD NOT BE COLLECTED UNTIL THE YEAR THE RENOVATED SECTIONS OF THE USU OPEN IN APPROXIMATELY FOUR YEARS.

YES I VOTE FOR THE INCREASE TO THE STUDENT BODY CENTER (USU) FEE.

NO I VOTE AGAINST THE STUDENT BODY CENTER (USU) FEE INCREASE.

END OF BALLOT

The Beach

CSULB SPRING 2015

SAMPLE BALLOT FOR DEMONSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY.
ONLINE FORMAT WILL DIFFER.

We think that the teachers who have received these emails have an obligation to consult with their students prior to giving away precious, and expensive, class time.

OUR VIEW

Do we support the presentations that Students for Quality Education has asked to give regarding the upcoming USU fee referendum?

Ultimately, yes. However, we would prefer to see SQE find a better time and place for these presentations.

In light of the fact that Associated Students, Inc. surveyed our student body last semester and found that 80 percent of students are satisfied with the USU as it is today, we feel that the referendum itself is a waste of time.

The same survey also found that students would most likely only use the USU about 9 percent more than they already do. With that in mind, what exactly justifies the $165 raise of student fees?

"SQE stands against all fees," according to an email that was sent by the California Faculty Association Long Beach chapter to CSULB teachers on behalf of the student organization.

The email was sent on Jan. 21, and it asked teachers to allow SQE representatives to take five or ten minutes of class time to give presentations regarding the referendum.

According to the email, presentations were set to begin on Monday, and would be available to teachers who were interested in giving up ten minutes of class time through Feb. 26, which marks the end of the big vote.

Of course, we applaud the effort and initiative that SQE has taken in order to provide the student body with the argument that opposes the potential new student fee. As it is, ASI has only provided students with arguments in favor of the fee.

Dating back to the last part of the fall semester in 2014, the ASI Facebook page has been riddled with "Vote YES" posts with regard to the upcoming referendum. SQE is merely supplying the much needed other side of the story.

The fact that the increase won't necessarily affect the present student body shouldn't be a sales pitch; it should be cause for concern about the overall intentions of the bureaucracy that governs CSULB students.

But, is class time really the right time for these political presentations?

As a staff, we are split on this question. While some of us believe that the classroom might be the very best place for this kind of student-led politicking, others on staff feel that it might be better to keep class time for course work only.

There may be students in these classes who feel that some of the class time they are paying for is being wasted, and they may feel helpless to do much about it.

However, these presentations are the only surefire way of capturing students' attention.

We think that the teachers who have received these emails have an obligation to consult with their students prior to giving away precious, and expensive, class time.

On top of that, we would like to see SQE, and other student groups for that matter, utilize the Free Speech area on campus as an attempt to make a lasting impression with the student body.

It would be incredibly effective to see large signs or students giving presentations in the middle of the campus throughout the day, rather than a mere ten minutes at the beginning or end of a class.

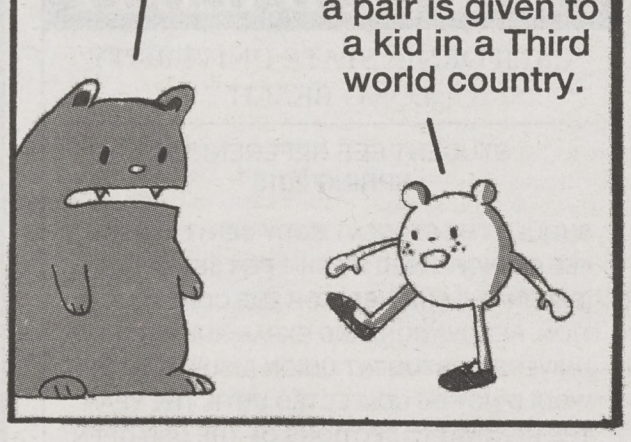
SQE indicated in the aforementioned email that it plans to collect cards from students in the next few weeks in order to get a sense of what the student body wants.

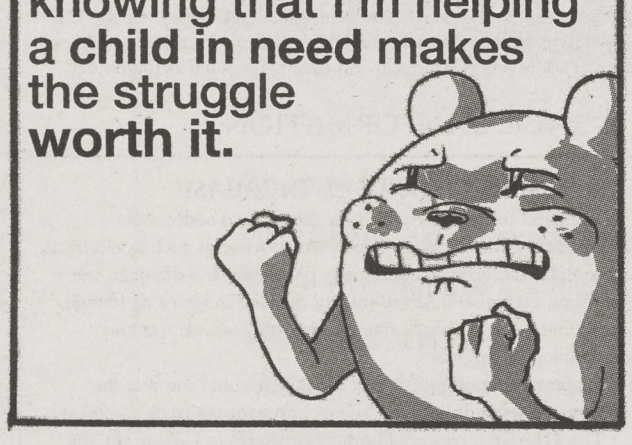
We feel that this is the direction that ASI and the USU Board of Trustees should have taken with regards to implementing a referendum. We worry that the referendum may be for something they are not telling us about, since they already know what students' opinion is after having done their own survey.

Students clearly enjoy the USU as it is, and if that's the case...why is our student government wasting time and effort trying to change our minds?

Good luck SQE! Students, the referendum is coming regardless of whether it is needed. Be sure to vote, and to know what you're voting for.

Beach toons


Whoa, what's with the shoes?
Oh yeah! It's this season's hot new fashion trend. For each pair you buy, a pair is given to a kid in a Third world country.


These shoes may be flimsy, uncomfortable, and overpriced, but knowing that I'm helping a child in need makes the struggle worth it.

Why do Americans keep sending us these crappy shoes? We work in a NIKE factory all day.
Too bad potable water wasn't this season's hot new fashion trend.

Daily 49er

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Letters Policy: All letters and e-mail must bear the phone number of the writer and must be no more than 300 words. The Daily 49er reserves the right to edit letters for publication in regard to space.

ABORT

continued from page 1

vulnerability of women and to guilt them into doing something against their will.

In a study, the ultrasound was made available by choice, and 42.5 percent of women decided to view it. Still, 98.8 percent of pregnancies were terminated, according to The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Women have a basic right to decide the fate of their own bodies. It is completely unacceptable to have their fate decided by a handful of male politicians who cannot possibly relate to the decision of whether to abort.

"I don't see anything moralistically wrong with it; saying that a sack of cells, especially when it's one that hasn't even formed a fetus, deserves a life when it's going to be substandard and make another person miserable," Jordan said. "That's just absurd to me."

The father of the pregnancy often cannot be relied upon to support the child, and child support is not enough, said Jordan. In her case, the father was supposed to pay for half of the abortion but broke his leg and is now out of work. As a result, Jordan has not received any financial help. Ultimately, it is the woman who bears the financial burden,

Women have a basic right to decide the fate of their own bodies. It is completely unacceptable to have their fate decided by a handful of male politicians who cannot possibly relate to the decision of whether to abort.

and it is the woman who must be allowed to make the choice.

Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-NC) is the leading proponent of this bill.

According to the Daily Kos, Rep. Duncan is the same person who recently had a lot to say about immigration policies in the United States. "It's kind of like having a house — and you're not homeowners, a lot of folks in this room, but your Mom and Dads are — taking the door off the hinges and allowing any kind of vagrant, or animal, or just somebody that's hungry, or somebody that wants to do your dishes for you, to come in," Duncan said. "And you can't say, 'No you can't come in.' And you can't say, 'No you can't stay all night.' Or 'No you can't have this benefit of using my deodorant.' All those things. We're giving those benefits away, which we earn as citizens of this nation, of being legalized citizens."

As he clearly cares so little for the rights or well being of his fellow humans, he cannot possibly be a reliable spokesman for this sensitive issue.

Abortion is not evil, and the women who get them are not monsters.

"The nurses all called me babe, asked where I was from, stuff like that," Jordan said. "One woman who talked to us was like, 'So the doctor is gonna tell you, wait 'til you feel cramping to take the pain meds. They ain't done this before. I have; take 'em right away.' It was like a bunch of friends figuring it all out together."

Jordan decided to face her ultrasound out of a desire to learn. Afterward, she did not change her mind.

Is tax reform doable?

The responses to President Barack Obama's call for tax reform, which he outlined as part of his State of the Union address, might indicate that the probabilities for progress on a tax overhaul with the Republican Congress and Democrat White House are near zero _ zippity zilch.

Republicans, such as the influential chairman of the Senate tax-writing panel, Orrin Hatch of Utah, suggest president Obama's proposal to increase taxes on the more fortunate among us to pay for a middle class tax cut are politically motivated and "It will be hard to work with him no matter what." Likewise, many Democrats cry that Republicans' only interest is protecting the very wealthy, including large multinational corporations. What a mess.

For sure, serious and significant challenges exist, and divining a decent compromise on tax reform is as elusive as most thought back in 1986 ... the last time the tax code received a major makeover. Nevertheless, the reality is that both sides deftly cloak some shared values.

Tax reform is definitely doable.

There's an overwhelming consensus that the 70,000 pages of our current tax code are not only oppressive, but outdated. While many Republicans have focused on the need for corporate tax reform and capital gains reductions, Hatch prefers comprehensive reform to make the system work. Many Democrats agree. Furthermore, even as a conservative's conservative (a 100 percent rating by the American Conservative Union just a few years ago), Hatch has a distinguished and highly commendable leadership record of working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle and Capitol. The late Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., acknowledged as one of the most liberal senators (an ACU rating of zero percent, at times) was among those who not only respected and considered him a friend, but also collaborated legislatively with Hatch on numerous occasions. Together, they were wildly successful in passing what were, initially, exceptionally controversial bills, including Immigration Reform, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Care Act, and a landmark children's health insurance law.

Hatch, working with conservative and moderate Democrats, as well as moderate and progressive Republicans, could rescue tax reform from death's dark door. He has the skills, stature and institutional history to get the job done.

Pundits and policymakers alike observed tax reform was "impossible" in 1986, but an ultimate Washington Post headline read the "Impossible that Became the Inevitable." It can be so once more.

—Bart Chilton, Tribune News Service

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The Career Tip of the Week is provided to the Daily 49er by the Career Development Center on Campus. English graduate student Rosa Trujillo assists with the compilation of the tip of the week.

CAREER TIP OF THE WEEK

UNLOCK CAREERLINK

Is there something you want to do before you leave CSULB? Besides graduate of course! How about visit the Career Center? No matter if you are a freshman, senior or alumni, you should get to know your Career Center and CareerLINK.

Unlock CareerLINK

You may already know that CareerLINK allows you to sign up for workshops/ interviews and apply for jobs/internships, but did you know that you can use it to research occupation data for class assignments or that CareerLINK has a cousin, NACElink, a national job search engine sponsored by The National Association of Colleges and Employers?

Network: Employers WANT 49ers!

All of the employment opportunities posted on CareerLINK are by recruiters who have a specific interest in hiring you due to the fact that you are a 49er. Top national and international companies want to connect with you. Use CareerLINK to see who will be on campus and take advantage of networking events hosted by the Career Center.

Watch the "Um"

Do you say "um" a lot? Do you say "um" a lot in interviews? So you made it to the interview, now what? You may know that you can make an appointment with a career counselor for a mock interview but did you know that in CareerLINK you have access to an online service, InterviewStream, to help you practice answering hard interview questions while recording your answers?

CareerLINK is one of the many resources available to help you prepare for success in the global workforce. Don't be one of the many students who leave college saying "I wish someone had told me about this before."

GOT SEX?

THE DAILY 49ER IS LOOKING FOR A "SEXPERT" COLUMNIST TO WRITE A WEEKLY SEX ADVICE COLUMN.

For a good time, email opedd49er@gmail.com

GLASS

continued from page 1

art student who studies drawing and painting, said that he's come to know Shelley through classes. He said that coming to the shows are both inspirational and beneficial "to see what your college and classmates are doing."

"From my eyes, it looks very innovative," said recent BFA CSULB graduate Jesse Minott, who sat down to sketch a few of Shelley's pieces.

As for his next move, Shelley will be Italy-bound to help establish a ceramic arts center in Tuscany, Italy, and partake in a school field trip to visit the Venice Biennale, a major contemporary art exhibition in Venice, Italy that showcases every two years.

After, he said he hopes to continue working in the summer, attend fall semester at CSULB and then apply for a masters program among Ivy League schools.

"What keeps me going is that I'll pull a piece out and I'll try to recreate it," Shelley said. "And in that journey of recreating it maybe I create three other things that start tributaries I have to follow up on."

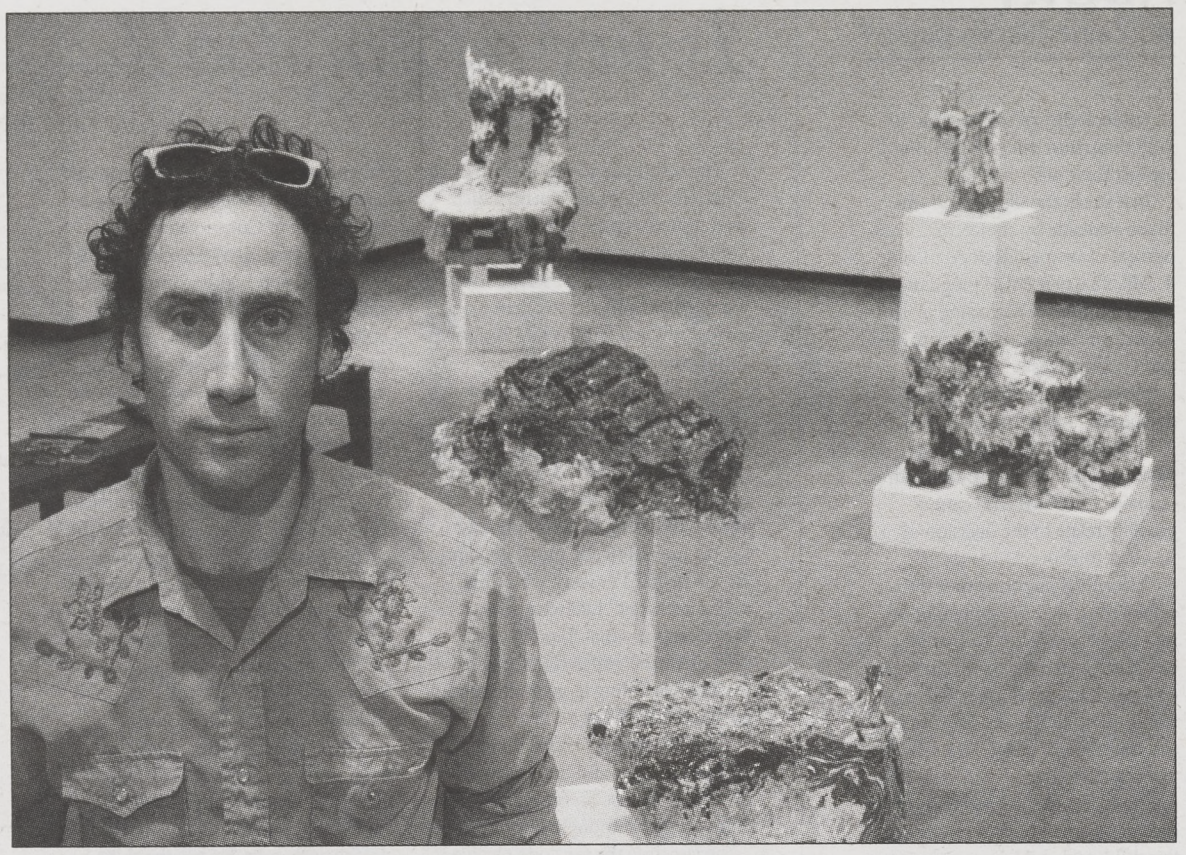
A more questionable medium he's dabbled with is spray paint. Several of his more intricate pieces are featured on top of crude matte structures of similar shape but differing color.

"Glass is so hard to get. It's valuable and it's a pain in the butt to make," Shelley said. "I make these pieces, pouring my heart into this work, and then just spray paint over it."

He said questions of value came to mind as he tagged his own work in hot pink.

"To me there's something really interesting about value," Shelley said. "What do we value? What do I value? Why do we value it? Can I paint over it? Does that make it less valuable?"

Shelley's exhibit is just one of five galleries that will be on display throughout the week until Thursday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. with extended hours lasting to 7 p.m. on Wednesday.



MICHAEL ARES | DAILY 49ER

Post baccalaureate Mackabee Shelly stands in front of his art pieces in his show titled "No Redemption Value" on Monday at the Gatov Gallery.

Mortdecai mortifies ★☆☆☆☆

Johnny Depp and Gwenyth Paltrow star in this weekend's blunder at the box-office.

Director: David Koepp
Starring: Johny Depp, Gwyneth Paltrow, Ewan McGregor
Run Time: 106 min
Rating: R

BY BROOKE BECHER
Diversions Editor

Ideally, when a joke is cracked, the response is a boisterous knee slap smothered in laughter; when an action scene screens, the audience should—metaphorically of course—feel the flames of the pyro, speed into car chases and dance through bullets.

Ideally, when a director sets out to create an art film, its cinematography should convince the audience through the innovative angles and striking color patterns that a world that was once only a vision may actually exist somewhere.

David Koepp's action comedy "Mortdecai" succeeds at none of these things.

Koepp's attempt to roll comedy, action and art into one film is the misunderstood blunder of this weekend's box-office.

Adorned in purple velvet, a neat side-combed mane and cane in hand, Johnny Depp stars as the mustachioed Lord Charlie Mortdecai in the film. The fidgety, debonair don is a full-time aristocrat and part-time con, who must swindle his way out of debt one masterpiece at a time due to his inherently lavish lifestyle.

Gwenyth Paltrow plays his well-aware wife, Johanna, who supervises her husband's tomfoolery, staying one step ahead by taking part in solving the mystery of a missing Goya painting, introduced to the couple by Ewan McGregor's character, Alistar Maitland.

In this film, Koepp's British humor doesn't quite translate. The cast is full of stars portraying unfunny caricatures inspired by the book anthology of Kyril Bonfiglioli's "Don't Point That Thing at Me."

It takes a certain type of intrigue to enjoy the quirkiness of British comedy, but slapstick jokes about sympathetic gag reflexes and the type of cheap-thrills violence that would entertain a four-year-old can only carry a farce so far.

Mordecai's nonsensical nature fits Depp's repertoire of bizarre roles but abandons his famous dark aesthetic. For the most part, his portrayal of a lax aristocrat floating on a whim is fine for what it is.

Depp's so-so acting was less of a distraction than the unoriginal plot.

Recent box-office releases of the past year have made stolen art their central focus. Now, Mordecai, an unworthy comedic alternative, joins that list because it wasn't tackled well enough in The Grand Budapest Hotel or The Monuments Men.

One risk that got the best of this film is that it's difficult to relate to. An important aspect when tying together abstract concepts is to make sure it engages the audience—not turns them away.

The action that was attempted in the screenplay failed to shock. The most heinous crime is committed against a multi-million dollar vase and concludes in the first scene.

Otherwise, the audience is stuck with a few under-whelming car chases, boring tussles and empty threats from the wretched "bad guys."

Mortdecai is the cinematographic equivalent to a pebble that sinks instead of skips or the premature, raised hand, deprived of a high five.

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Men's Basketball

Positive I.D.

The LBSU men's basketball team is starting to find its identity at just the right time.

By Oscar Terrones
Sports Editor

For much of its non-conference schedule, the Long Beach State men's basketball team struggled with inconsistency and inexperience.

Five games into league play, the 49ers believe they are starting to become the team they envisioned they would be last November.

Head coach Dan Monson began the season by trying to incorporate five new players into his rotation, not yet sure what he had in his four new freshmen and senior transfer Eric McKnight. The results were not always favorable, but Monson likes the progress his team has made so far.

"I think defensively," Monson said. "Our half court defense is something we've really improved on when you look back to where we started in the season giving up 95 and 97 [respectively] in our first two games of the year."

Monson said the team's defensive identity has been hampered by the team's poor rebounding. If they are not rebounding, then they are forced to defend more possessions for longer stretches of time. Offensively, Monson doesn't seem too concerned.

"I think offensively we're doing capable things. I think our offense can improve, but it's on pace with where we want to be. It's just putting it all together on a consistent basis."

Over the last month there has been a change with the team's consistency. Monson has been able to pencil in at four surefire starters for much of the season. There has been a balance in playing time between freshmen forwards Jack Williams and Temidayo Yussuf that is leading to more on court success.

Monson mixed and matched his starting frontcourt for most of the season. He has been able to rely on senior forward David Samuels, and now he is finding that same trust in his two young players.

Senior guard McKay LaSalle said the team's identity is a chain. He said the team works together to win while not just relying on one player. He said they are finding different ways to win.

"[Senior point guard] Mike Caffey is our guy," LaSalle said. "But the other night, [sophomore guard] Travis Hammonds came out and [won the game]. It can be someone new every night. We have a really good chain."

Hammonds said Monson has preached for the last couple of week about winning the moment.

"Instead of worrying about the next play or something that's happened in the past," Hammonds said. "Just focus on that moment or that possession. Winning that possession. Winning that ball screen. Talking, playing together."

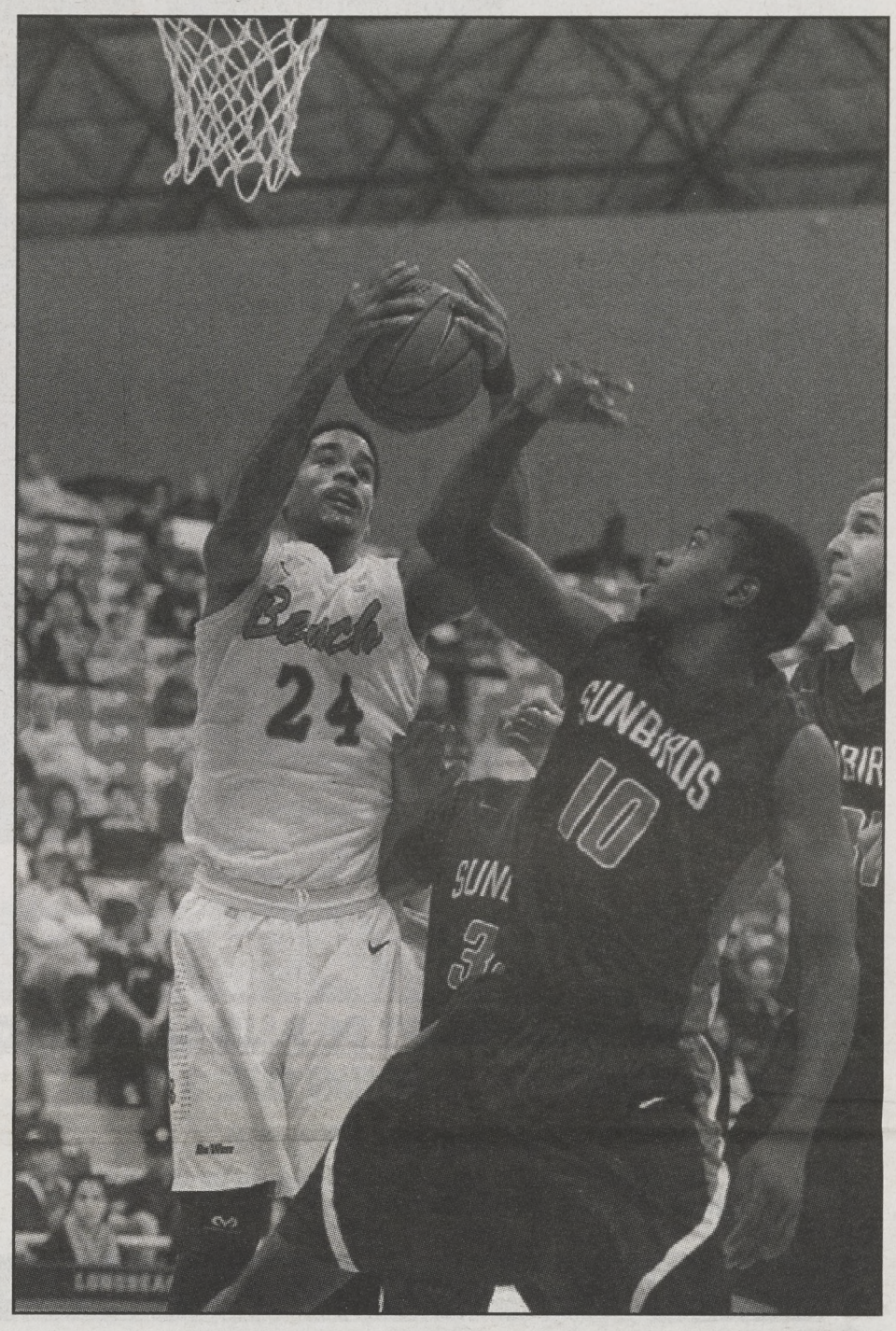
Monson said the biggest thing about March is not necessarily which team is better, but which one is the most consistent.

"As we come around, we play teams that are familiar with us," Monson said. "We're not going to fool anyone with stuff. You have to wear them down with being consistent and doing what you do best on a consistent basis."

Back in the flow

LBSU's Travis Hammonds is finding his rhythm down the stretch.

By Oscar Terrones
Sports Editor



John Fajardo | LBSU Athletics
LBSU guard Travis Hammonds continues to give The Beach a spark off the bench.

A key contributor last year after joining the Long Beach State men's basketball team midseason, sophomore guard Travis Hammonds is finding his comfort zone after early season struggles.

Head coach Dan Monson suspended Hammonds before a Nov. 18 game at Xavier for "personal reasons," as Monson put it. He refused to give further comment on the situation other than saying Hammonds has had a difficult couple of months.

After missing the next five games, Hammonds returned to the team in a Dec. 3 68-57 home win against Nevada. Hammonds played 17 minutes off the bench, scoring eight points and grabbing three rebounds.

"I know how Travis can play," senior guard Tyler Lamb said of Hammonds in the postgame press conference.

"I know he's not him yet," Lamb said. "He's getting back in the flow, but he gave us a lot off the bench today in the time that he did play. I know he's just going to keep getting more comfortable and get back to the old Travis. That's going to help us a lot."

Slowly but surely Hammonds has worked his way back into Monson's rotation. His best game of the season was last Saturday night in the 64-58 win at Cal State Northridge. Hammonds scored a team-leading 16 points in just 17 minutes off the bench.

Hammonds said it felt good to finally have a big game.

"Just [making] better decisions," Hammonds said, elaborating on being Monson's "doghouse" and gaining the coaching staff's trust. "Just being on the same page as coach [Monson] and the rest of the coaching staff. I got back on track and I'm just doing what they tell me to do."

Hammonds said coming off the bench really is not that big a change for him because it is what he did for most of last year. He declined to comment on the circumstances of his suspension, but did say he has to be better off the court to be effective on the court.

"For me personally, I have my head back on straight. I'm getting back in the flow. Now I feel better and lighter on my feet."

The 49ers will need Hammonds' productivity off the bench as they get deeper into Big West Conference play. Monson likes to play as many as 11 guys a game, and he still mixes up his starting frontcourt frequently. With inexperienced freshmen guards Justin Bibbins and Deontae North battling inconsistency, Hammonds' reliability will be big a factor in the team's success.

"He's done well," Monson said. "He's found a role. He gives us a lot of depth and versatility. He can play multiple positions and he can play against multiple types of teams. He can stretch teams with his jump shot. His inside presence for his size is kind of an odd size matchup inside for people [to handle]. [He] gives us a different dimension. It's good to have him back."

Home dominance

LBSU men's basketball team is maintaining a winning tradition at home.

By Oscar Terrones
Sports Editor

The toughness of the Long Beach State men's basketball team's schedule is one of the most discussed topics surrounding the team.

The 49ers are 6-0 at home with wins over perennial NCAA Tournament Kansas State and a pair of conference opponents in Cal Poly and UC Santa Barbara. Their defensive numbers have improved significantly in the Walter Pyramid, giving up 14 points less per game compared to overall.

Their average win margin is over 13 points, but head coach Dan Monson doesn't place much stock in the team's home record. He said you have to take into account the low number of games and the fact they haven't played as good a schedule at home.

"That's part of it," Monson said. "70 percent of all college basketball games are won by the home team. You defend your home turf and that's something you have to be proud of. Hopefully we can continue to do that."

The team's struggles on the road and in neutral sites have overshadowed its excellent home performances.

Historically, the 49ers have had great success in the Pyramid. Their home record for the last over the last five years is 51-12, including a perfect 12-0 in the 2011-12 season.

Monson's players agreed that it is important to take advantage of the home games that the team does get to play. Sophomore guard Travis Hammonds credited the fans for their support for the team's success at home. He did lament the fact last year the team let a few games slip that they should have won.

"Last year we broke the winning the streak we had here," Hammonds said. "With Irvine coming in and beating us the first conference game, then losing against Santa Barbara. This is all about restoring order. That's what we've tried to focus on this year."

Some of the main beneficiaries of home games are role players, or players who come off the bench and feel more comfortable at home. Senior guard McKay LaSalle noted how playing on the same court they practice on gives them an advantage.

"We've been on the road so much in December," LaSalle said. "It's kind of exciting to be home in front of our fans. We have that comfortability here. Sleeping in our own beds never hurts either."

Monson reiterated the benefit of playing so many tough opponents and rad games overall. He said he thinks the team is getting more into a rhythm and guys like Hammonds and senior guard Tyler Lamb are starting to get on a roll in terms knowing what they need to do to win.

"Again, I think our November and December has helped us in January," Monson said. "Those games are great if you win them, but they also can be great to play and get better in them. We learned a lot about ourselves in November and December playing that schedule that we play."